

LOS ANGELES COUNTY VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION

2615 S. GRAND AVE., SUITE 100
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90007



United We Stand



Joseph N. Smith
Director

MINUTES REGULAR MEETING Wednesday, April 11, 2012

Present:

Absent:

Commissioners

Bob Archuleta, Chair
Carvel Gay, Vice Chair
Dave Culmer
Ramon Rodriguez
Stephanie Stone

Commissioners

Mark MacCarley
Fred Flores
Steve Rosmarin

County Department

Military and Veterans Affairs

Jim Meyer, Bob Hope Patriotic Hall Building Manager
Karla Gutierrez, Administrative Assistant

Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Approval of Minutes

Vice Chair Carvel Gay called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m., informed everyone that Chair Archuleta was on his way. Vice Chair thanked everyone for coming to today's meeting. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner David Culmer and due to a lack of a quorum, only five Commissioners present, the approval of minutes was postponed.

Roll Call

As noted above.

Chairman's Report

Chair Archuleta thanked the audience for their participation and attendance. He stated that if you're here today it means that you really care about our veterans. He stated that as the holidays pass that we remember the men and women in uniform. "Thank You" to those who serve.

Comments from Audience (three minutes each)

Jay Morales, retired Marine, Vietnam Veteran and Adjutant, American Legion, 17th District, Los Angeles Post No. 8, stated that last month he gave Colonel Smith a memo that stated the opposition of putting the veterans' organizations in the basement. The statement stated, "that a recommendation/proposal is being considered to consolidate all the current veterans organizations/groups into one central location in the basement of Patriotic Hall in order to better serve the veteran constituency of Los Angeles County. This recommendation is flawed, consolidation is a misleading method of promoting cost effectiveness, when I fact, it will lead to the eventual elimination of those few veteran service organizations which still remain as tenants."

Jay Morales reiterated what he had stated at last month's meeting, "this is a veteran building and not a community service building; it belongs to the future that other will inherit. Mr. Morales stated that he is still not opposed to the

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organizational structure of veteran organizations in the building. "We're going to be grouped and lumped together. The external organizations that once their in the building will continue to serve veterans. That's the issue; the consolidation. Kenny Hahn warned about "consolidation leads to elimination."

Rashid El Malik, Veterans of America, provided a brief introduction to the organization. He informed the Commission on the initiative for disabled veterans. Mr. Malik stated he is a combat veteran that has PTSD and was not aware of it for 20 years. He started Veterans of America with very little support. A non-profit that helped veterans with their disability claim, the veterans that were assisted donated to my non-profit. He stated that the VA has taken away his accreditation.

Mr. Malik stated he has started an initiative and is asking for support.

Jeanne Bonfilio, Public Information Officer, stated that the WLA Home has 84 residents and wanted to remind everyone on the Veterans Homes in Barstow there is immediate occupancy, no waiting. They have the independent Living Unit. She stated that to be eligible an applicant must be 62 years of age or older (or younger if disabled) a resident of California and have served honorably in the military. A Statement of Intent to Apply is available on the Internet at: www.cdva.ca.gov/Homes/DocAndImages/statementofintentform.pdf or contact GLAVC temporary office at (818) 742-1761 and an application will be mailed to those interested.

Ms. Bonfilio stated that the Secretary of the California Dept. of Veterans Affairs gave a special certificate to Commissioner Steve Rosmarin at the Volunteer of the Year Luncheon where he was honored as the Los Angeles County Volunteer of the Year for the Third Supervisorial District.

Commissioner Stone acknowledged Ms. Bonfilio for all the work she does in assisting the veterans.

Bob Hope Patriotic Hall Renovation – Bill Gelpi

Bill Gelpi, Principal Facilities Project Manager, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, stated the following updates on the building and showed a power point presentation of the work being done inside Bob Hope Patriotic Hall:

- The kitchen equipment will be installed within the next 2 weeks.
- The Auditorium is fully ADA (Americans with Disability Act) compliant and capacity will be 500 people.
- The 8th floor has office spaces and meeting rooms that have been fully insulated to mitigate noise.
- There are additional bathrooms that have been added to the half floors.
- The 10th Floor Gym the floor has also been reconditioned to mitigate noise.
- Scheduled to open in September 2012.

Mr. Jay Morales expressed his concerns on the changes being done to the building. Mr. Gelpi stated that in regards to historic artifacts many are in storage and the walls with wainscoting will be going to go back to how they where. Wherever historical fabrics can be preserved, they are. However modifications had had to be made to the extent possible the building will look the same. Mr. Gelpi stated he shared the same feeling as Jay Morales it is a veterans building and his orders are just to enhance the building.

Chair Archuleta requested a building walk-through. The Chair also requested that the person in charge of distributing space at the Hall be invited to next month's meeting.

VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare Center – Ralph Tillman

Jeff Blake, Associate Chief of Communications at VA, distributed customer service scores, the Inpatient Environment of Care Report Initiative and the 2011 Annual Report.

Commissioner Stone stated there was an issue with provider waiting time and Mr. Blake stated that would look into it provide a survey and report back actual wait time.

Chair Archuleta inquired as to Commissioner Culmer's concern regarding not having computer access to be able to look at a veteran's information. Each veteran representative has to call the Federal Building to get this information

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which prolongs the process. Chair Archuleta stated he had asked that Mr. Jeff Blake inquire with the VA Administration on what can be done to assist Commissioner Culmer and the other service representative so they could better assist our veterans. Mr. Blake responded that he can have access but not real time. Chair Archuleta stated that the problem then still needs resolving.

Blake Anderson, Wileen Hernandez and Michi Riley, VA GLA Web Team, did a presentation on the VA's social media. Mr. Anderson presented the social media and explained why the VA is getting involved in the social media network; to provide timely information to veterans. Ms. Hernandez and Riley discussed the VA and the topics discussed in Twitter and Ms. Riley encouraged everyone to look at the website and pass the information to other veterans, their family and friends to access the website.

Veterans Home Support Committee – Steve Rosmarin

Commissioner Steve Rosmarin was unable to attend meeting.

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Report – Colonel Joseph Smith

James Meyer, Building Manager, Bob Hope Patriotic Hall, provided the written Department Report for the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs in lieu of Colonel Joseph N. Smith, Director's absence and requested it be accepted as written.

New Business

Election of Commission Officers

Bob Hope Renovation and person in charge of assigning space.

Item's for Next Month's Agenda

- Veterans Home Support Committee – Steve Rosmarin
- Bob Hope Patriotic Hall Renovation Update – Bill Gelpi
- Commissioner Gay will invite two Veterans for April's meeting to offer the Invocation and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Good of the Order

Commissioner Culmer; stated he had nothing for the good of the order.

Commissioner Stone; stated that USC Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans & Military Families (CIR) will now be managing and hosting the Los Angeles Veterans Collaborative Committee.

Vice Chair Gay; stated there needs to be more meeting support from his fellow colleagues. There needs to be more attendance at these Commission meetings.

Chair Archuleta; stated that in May we have Memorial Day and he encourages everyone to remember and honor our fallen heroes.

Chair Archuleta adjourned meeting at 3:30 p.m.

Karla Gutierrez
Administrative Assistant
April 11, 2012

Note: The next Commission meeting is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, May 9, 2012 at 1:30 p.m. in Suite 100 at the Department of Public Social Services site at 2615 S. Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, CA.